

Mrs. Atherton's New Novel

THE WHITE MORNING—By Gertrude Atherton. (Frederick A. Stokes Company.) \$1 net.

ALl Mrs. Atherton's fine qualities as a writer, and all her faults, are very much in evidence in this latest book of hers. It is written with a splendid dash and vigor that carries the reader from page to page breathless, and with the wonderful insight into the heart of the individual man and woman, particularly the woman, in matters of love, that has always characterized Mrs. Atherton's work.

But it also exemplifies her lack of understanding of mass psychology and mass movements, her tendency to read the past, present and future in the light of individual destinies. And it emphasizes her growing inclination to deal with those things she does not understand, to the detriment of her justified reputation as a novelist.

Her book is the story of an individual woman's destiny, and a prophecy, or a

that would make us think Gisela is such an exception.

With a happy touch all her own Mrs. Atherton gives in a few sentences here and there a complete and accurate portrait of Gisela's aristocratic father and the other men of his class. She rather divorces them, however, from the historical background that has made this class the important and baneful fact it has been for several centuries in Prussian, German and now world politics. They float in the air, as it were, and Mrs. Atherton is vague on the source of their income. Their "estates" are mentioned casually now and then, somewhat as though they were American country homes. But these estates are the source of the income of this class and the very source of their political and social standing as well. Although it is a minor point, it might be suggested to Mrs. Atherton that the name Niebuhr is more associated with intellectualism in Germany than with junkerism. A German novelist would have given such a family a name ending in "ow" or "itz," which would have stamped them at once in the minds of German readers.

Are These the Facts?

It is inferred that Mrs. Atherton has not been in Germany since the war began, or she would not say that women are not under surveillance and could therefore organize the revolution as they do in her tale. For the last four years at least women as well as men have been under strictest surveillance in Germany, and particularly all women "on their lone" and known to be in the least radical. As to the "almost total absence of poverty in the Teutonic Empire," the German Socialists of whom she writes can certify to housing conditions, factory wages and the like that reveal depths of poverty unspeakable in all large centres. It is not necessary to go to Socialist sources. The records of city lodging houses, refuges for the homeless and all charitable institutions in Germany speak for themselves. The lot of the actual peasant and agricultural laborer, while not showing such mass poverty as exists in the cities, is still anything but a bed of roses.

But whatever the facts, Mrs. Atherton's golden touch of fiction has not left her. Of itself, as a story of the imagination, this novel has the power and aliveness of her best work.

Seldom has the attitude of the modern "rebel" woman toward love been treated with the strength, the delicacy and deep insight that are found in that part of the narrative which deals with Gisela's love for Franz von Nettelbeck. Scarcely any writer has shown so clearly the conflict in the soul of a woman whose mind has been broken through the trammels of class and caste, and who yet, when it is a question of the human elements of love, turns naturally to the man of her own class. The chapter devoted to the final culmination and the tragic ending of Gisela's great love is a superb bit of writing.

A Pre-Raphaelite's Life.

THOMAS WOOLNER, R. A. His Life in Letters—By Amy Woolner. (E. P. Dutton & Co.) \$6.

This biography of the famous sculptor by his daughter has a value for students of literature as well as for lovers of art. Thomas Woolner was one of the pre-Raphaelite brotherhood, a little group of wilful men that bade defiance to conventionality in British art and poetry and taught the world new laws of wild, marvellous beauty.

That curious movement, a vehement protest against Victorian and other narrowness, influencing as it did so many men of genius in the allied arts, is shown to us in this book through the letters that passed between Woolner and his comrades. He seems to have been most happy in his friendships, for this correspondence reveals the intimate and appreciative relations between him and many of the foremost men and women of his day.

The book might have been a trifle more selective to advantage, for, like many another biographical work, it includes letters that are of slight interest now, either for their content or their style. The fact that a famous name is signed to an epistle does not make it worth the reading of those of another day. But in the main the book is a faithful and worthy record of the life of a man who was a poet of sensitiveness and charm as well as a sculptor of distinction.

Such a book is more than the biography of an individual—it is the chronicle of a generation of great men.

A High-Hearted American

ADVENTURES AND LETTERS OF RICHARD HARDING DAVIS. (Scribner's.) \$2.50.

UNLESS you love the ingenuous spontaneity of a persistent youth, unless you are attracted by an immaculate but crisply snapping humor, unless you are a lover of country and of home, you will not be interested in Mr. Davis's revelation of himself in this book which his brother, Charles Belmont Davis, has compiled. To have been unconsciously writing one's own eulogy the whole of one's life is seldom given to any man, and these letters, never written with even the remotest idea of publication, are homefolk script—to his mother, mainly—with whom a man is just himself.

In none of his other works is he as comprehensive, as appealingly so, as in these simple unpretentious fragments. They embrace the period of his life from the days of his precious and hopeful youth at Lehigh University to the time of his death in 1917.

And if it has been said that the heroines and heroes of his fiction were unreal, impossibly well behaved and innocent young people, it is untrue. There are many women as lovely and some men as clean and chivalrous as they. Richard H. Davis himself was one. He had self-esteem and plenty of it. It crops out in his letters, but unless you are holding an envious grudge somewhere, it is forgiven, because it's just a natural, rambunctious exuberance, healthy and frank, unquestionably the high tide that floated his best efforts. There are many amusing anecdotes of celebrated people and characteristic impressions of places. Of the two, he enjoyed the people more.

His First and Best Seller.

The love letters to his wife, Bessie McCoy Davis, in the latter part of the book, are the pungent essence of the whole, unlike, even in expression, anything that has gone before. They snap and flame with all the vitality of a highly strung emotional nature, the nature that was moved as easily to tears of sympathy

And here are his lines to John Drew:

A VOUS, JOHN DREW.
John Drew, I am your debtor
For a very pleasant letter
And a lot of cabinet photos
Of the Butterflies and you
And I think you very kind
That you kept me so in mind
And pitied me in exile.
So I do, John Drew.

John Drew, twist you and me
Precious little I can see
Of what good there is in solitude
That poets say they view,
For I hate to be in bed
With a candle at my head
Sitting vis à vis with Conscience.
So would you, John Drew.

John Drew, then promise me
That as soon as I am free
I may sit in the first entrance
As Lamb always let me do,
And watch you fume and fret
While the innocent soubrette
Takes the centre of the stage a-
Way from you, John Drew.

The book is long, but it is good reading, intensely American, deliciously human, crystal clear. And always there is the lash of ready wit.

TRAINING AND REWARDS OF THE PHYSICIAN—By Richard C. Cabot, M.D. (J. B. Lippincott Co.) \$1.25.

A good many readers will remember Dr. Cabot for his former volume, *What Men Live By*. Here he is the same wise, quiet and thoroughly articulate writer, dealing this time with his own special profession from the point of view of a quarter century's experience, and for the use of the young man about to enter in.

It is no ponderous, exhaustive treatise, but a short hundred and fifty pages of good memorable counsel, sane and radiating a steadily warm enthusiasm which never blazes or explodes. In these days of the arrogance of sheer science it is refreshing to find a scientist with so just a sense of the proportion of things, able to assign imagination its true place in the search for natural truth, and to set human understanding at the head of the practitioner's requirements without derogating in the least the essential importance of the purely scientific elements of either task.

The bulk of the book is taken up with such concrete and practical suggestions as experience may predigest for the easy assimilation of inexperience. It is more exposition than advice; nothing is urged; much is made clear. And the short latter portion of the volume warns the physician not to look for reward in money or in gratitude nor even in the sense of useful success, but rather in the employment of all his faculties in advancing the peculiar progress of this age.

THERE'S PIPPINS AND CHEESE TO COME—By Charles S. Brooks. (Yale University Press.) \$2.

The personal essay is not perhaps a lost art, but it is an unfamiliar art in these days. After a somewhat prim and straight walking youth in the times of Bacon and a more vigorous maturity through the Georgian and early Victorian eras, it began (as Jeremy has it) to put on softness and the symptoms of a sickly age. Chief of these was a certain stilted though genial self-consciousness, a growing affectation of urbanity, as of an old bean plumping himself upon the finer courtesies of his obsolete youth.

Mr. Brooks is a little precious, a little supersensitive to his own archaism, a little of what those whom literature embarrasses mean by the term literary. He would have you know that he is a genuine antique as to style and spirit. Yet he has humor and observation and unforced sentiment and a warm twilight of reminiscence.



RICHARD HARDING DAVIS
"THE ADVENTURES AND LETTERS OF RICHARD HARDING DAVIS" HAVE JUST BEEN PUBLISHED BY CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS. © 1917 BY CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS.

as it was to laughter. At one time Davis refers to the publication of his first book while at Lehigh in 1894: "My family paid to have it printed, and finding no one else was buying it, bought up the entire edition. Finding the first edition had gone so quickly, I urged them to finance a second one, and when they were unenthusiastic I was hurt. Several years later when I found the entire collection in our attic I understood their reluctance."

Mr. Davis never was well known as a poet. The following, quoted from sporadic verses in the volume, written when he was confined to his bed, may or may not have been the reason:

I have wandered up and down in many different lands
I have been to Fort Worth, Texas, and I've tramped through Jersey sands.
I have seen Pike's Peak by moonlight and I've visited the Fair,
And to save enumeration, I've been nearly everywhere;
But no matter where I've rested and no matter where I go,
I have found to be on Broadway where the orchids grow.



Gertrude Atherton

would-be prophecy. The heroine, Gisela von Niebuhr, is a superb type of womanhood and worthy of a leading place in the gallery of fine women Mrs. Atherton has given to fiction. She is the daughter of a typical East Prussian nobleman, but she rebels against class and sex tradition after her father's death, goes to America as a governess under an assumed plebeian name, returns to Germany and becomes a successful writer.

A Women's Revolution.

When the war comes she goes to the front as a Red Cross nurse, but there her growing revolt is strengthened by what she sees and she finally becomes the leader of an organized revolt among the women of Germany, which in a delightfully easy and complete fashion puts an end to the war. This in brief is the plot of the book.

Mrs. Atherton adds to her novel an article appearing in the current *Bookman* in which she vindicates the plausibility of her theme.

Gisela von Niebuhr is a perfectly possible and plausible person. Her revolt, as a type of personal rebellion, is one which is taking place, has been taking place, in hundreds of cases all over Germany for the past decade. Also a woman's rebellion to end the war is not unthinkable and would be a consummation devoutly to be wished. But that it can be done in the way Mrs. Atherton describes seems more than doubtful.

Where Women Rebel.

Mrs. Atherton reads the history of the French Revolution and the present Russian revolution as the result of such individual personal rebellions against personal fates. But are not such women as Gisela, while rebels regarding their own class and caste traditions and earnest rebels regarding legal disabilities for women, usually conservatives and Tories regarding general political and economic conditions? There are exceptions, of course, but Mrs. Atherton says nothing

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